



**EPAP** EXPANDED PROFESSIONAL  
ASSOCIATES PROGRAM

## **EXPANDED PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATES PROGRAM (EPAP) UPDATE: INCREASE IN TOTAL POSITIONS; ADDITIONAL INFORMATION MANAGEMENT POSITIONS; AND LIST OF AVAILABLE POSITIONS FOR SPRING AND SUMMER 2015 FOR QUALIFIED FAMILY MEMBERS**

**1. SUMMARY:** The Department is pleased to announce an increase in FY2015 in the total number of Expanded Professional Associates Program (EPAP) positions, including additional Information Management (IM) positions with funding provided by the Bureau of Information Resource Management (IRM). This cable provides details on the number of positions available to be filled and the process for EPAP qualified U.S. citizen eligible family members (EFM) to apply for the available positions beginning in the Spring or Summer 2015.

**2. PROGRAM OVERVIEW:** EPAP now provides 200 professional level Foreign Service full-time positions, funded centrally, primarily by the Department of State and some through ICASS, to U.S. citizen EFMs serving at U.S. Missions abroad. Potential candidates must apply for qualification to the program during one of the application open seasons held twice a year and must be qualified in the area advertised to be considered for a position. Each regional bureau is authorized a number of EPAP positions, as determined by the Under Secretary for Management, and the bureau makes the final decision on which positions it fills within its allotment.

**3. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION MANAGEMENT POSITIONS:** The Under Secretary for Management has authorized up to an additional 50 (maximum) EPAP Professional Associate positions in the IM area, funded through the Bureau of IRM. These 50 positions are in addition to the 200 positions allocated to Regional bureaus.

This IM expansion will be a part of future iterations of EPAP; further opportunities may be announced later this fiscal year.

**4. POSITIONS AVAILABLE TO FILL IN SPRING AND SUMMER 2015:** The Regional Bureaus have reviewed all requests received from posts and have determined they have the following number of available positions to fill (the remaining authorized positions are currently encumbered):

<b>Bureau</b>	<b>Total Authorizations</b>	<b>FY15 Positions to Fill</b>
AF	25	20
EAP	37	8
EUR	45	26
IO	5	3
NEA	27	13
SCA	27	13
WHA	34	12
<b>Regional Bureau Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>IRM</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>

The Regional Bureaus and IRM have created a list of available positions that is posted on HR/FLO's website:

<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c61605.htm>

This list indicates the highest grade level at which the position may be offered; however, this does not guarantee that a selected candidate will be offered a position at this level. (See paragraph 7 below for explanation of salary determinations.) To be considered for the position, an applicant must have the stated language requirements. A few more positions than can be filled are being advertised because there is no guarantee that there will be a qualified family member available at post at the right time to apply for every position. Due to the limited number of positions worldwide, bureaus may not be able to fill an advertised position even if there are candidates at post who are qualified. The bureaus can only fill up to the number of vacant positions indicated above.

**5. HOW TO APPLY FOR ALL EPAP POSITIONS:** Candidates should review the list posted on HR/FLO's website. Candidates must already be qualified in the advertised area in order to apply for the position. For example, for a position in Human Resources, candidates must have been previously qualified in EPAP in Human Resources. Qualification in Management does not cover an EPAP position in Human Resources or any other area.

Candidates must be qualified in both areas for any positions that are listed in two areas, e.g. Professional Associate – Economics/Political; candidates must be qualified in both Economics and Political to apply. Candidates are expected to make a one-year commitment to the program and their sponsoring employee must have at least one year remaining on their overseas posting. Candidates may only be employed at the same post to which his/her sponsoring employee is assigned.

U.S. citizen eligible family members who have been qualified in the program in the area(s) a position is advertised, depending on when they received their qualification, must submit to the appropriate regional bureau representative (see email address below) the following documents:

**a. Candidates who qualified for the advertised EPAP area during the Spring or Fall 2014 open season:** a letter of interest that includes all required information (Use the template located at the bottom of <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c61605.htm>).

**b. Candidates qualified in the advertised EPAP area before the Spring 2014 open season (that is during the open seasons from 2008 – 2013) must submit both:**

i. a letter of interest that includes all required information (Use the template located at the bottom of <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c61605.htm>)

**and**

ii. a USAJOBS.gov/Federal Resume or a DS-174. The blank DS-174 form is available at:

<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/136408.pdf>

Applicants should send their documents and address any questions related to the advertised positions to the appropriate Regional Bureau using the email address listed below:

[AF-EPAP@state.gov](mailto:AF-EPAP@state.gov)  
[EAP-EPAP@state.gov](mailto:EAP-EPAP@state.gov)  
[EUR-IO-EPAP@state.gov](mailto:EUR-IO-EPAP@state.gov)  
[NEA-EPAP@state.gov](mailto:NEA-EPAP@state.gov)  
[SCA-EPAP@state.gov](mailto:SCA-EPAP@state.gov)  
[WHA-EPAP@state.gov](mailto:WHA-EPAP@state.gov)

Required documents will be accepted **until 5:00 p.m. Washington, D.C. time, Friday, February 27, 2015. No documents will be accepted or applications considered if they arrive after the above deadline.**

**6. SELECTION:** The regional bureaus will review all applications and will forward the list of candidates to the respective posts to schedule interviews and conduct any required language testing. The Community Liaison Office (CLO) Coordinator should sit in on all interviews as a non-voting member of the Post Employment Committee (PEC) unless the CLO is a candidate for the position. The PEC will recommend the selected candidate to the bureau, who then makes the final hiring and salary decisions. Bureaus, however, are not authorized to offer a position to a candidate until after the sponsoring employee has been paneled or it is verified that the sponsoring employee has a tour of duty that will permit the applicant to serve a full year. The bureau will send an offer letter to the selected candidate and non-selection letter to other applicants. Once an EFM has accepted an offer, the bureau will send the authorization to hire cable to post.

In most cases candidates will be hired using the Family Member Appointment (FMA) mechanism. The regulations governing FMAs are contained in 3 FAM 8120. Information on the FMA is available online:

<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c21641.htm>

Selected candidates currently in a Civil Service position will be converted to a Family Member Appointment. Family members not eligible for an FMA will be hired under a Personal Services Agreement (PSA).

Direct-hire Foreign Service (FS) employees on Leave Without Pay (LWOP) may hold dual appointments; they will not, however, receive hiring preference over other U.S. citizen EFMs. This is consistent with Department of State policy, effective 10/12/11. FS employees on LWOP will only be considered and interviewed for EPAP Professional Associate positions when all other applicants not on LWOP have been given first consideration.

**7. SALARY, BENEFITS, AND ALLOWANCES:** Salary will be determined at the time an offer of employment is made by a bureau HR Specialist based on the advertised grade of the position and the individual's educational background and work experience as they relate to the salary standards developed for EPAP for each type of Professional Associate position. Salary standards are different from qualification standards. The Qualification Evaluation Panels (QEPs) determine whether candidates are qualified for positions in a specific EPAP area using the qualification standards. Qualification in an area does not guarantee an offer at the advertised (or full performance level) of a position.

This means, candidates may be offered a position at a grade or more lower than the advertised grade of the position if their educational background and work experience do not meet the requirements for the advertised or full performance grade level. If a position is not offered at the advertised grade, the candidate would be able to convert to the next highest grade, FP-06 to FP-05 after successfully completing 52-weeks at the appointment level, or FP-05 to FP-04 after successfully completing 18 months at the FP-05 level.

Highest Previous Rate (HPR) will be honored. That is, if a selected candidate was previously paid a higher rate as a USG federal employee under a direct hire appointment (not contract) documented with a SF-50 personnel action, the candidate will receive a salary offer at the highest step which matches the previously highest rate within the grade of the position, up to step 14. Even with HPR, no candidate may be offered a position at a grade higher than the advertised grade of the position.

EPAP Professional Associates hired under an FMA will receive Overseas Foreign Service Comparability pay and will accrue leave at a rate based on their length of service. EPAP Professional Associates on an FMA will be able to pay into the Thrift Savings Plan, FEGLI, FEHB, and FERS. They may also be eligible to receive Non-Competitive Executive Order 12721 Eligibility after 52 weeks of government service. For FAQs about Executive Order 12721 Eligibility, please visit:

<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c21651.htm>

Salaries for EPAP Professional Associate positions in program areas are funded centrally by the Department of State. Additional funding will be provided to bureaus to cover the U.S. Department of State share of any ICASS Professional Associate positions. All other costs associated with regular EPAP Professional Associate positions i.e. support, training (except for Information Management positions), travel, premium compensation are post's responsibility.

EPAP Professional Associates on an FMA appointment are personally eligible to receive danger pay but no other allowances, differentials, or other benefits (including but not limited to, post differential, temporary lodging, living quarters, transfer, home service transfer, education, and separate maintenance allowances, advances of pay, home leave, and rest and recuperation). They will not be granted any entitlements, such as shipment of household goods or housing, in addition to those already granted to their sponsoring employee. EPAP Professional Associates at unaccompanied posts must be included on their sponsoring employee's travel orders and may not accept Separate Maintenance Allowance (SMA) once they have commenced travel to post.

**8. AFTER SELECTION:** All applicants must commit to serve a minimum of one year. On the effective day of hire (not the date of the conditional offer), the candidate's sponsoring employee must have at least one year remaining of his/her tour of duty. Applicants do not need to have a security clearance at the time of application. Selected candidates however, are required to obtain the appropriate clearance for the position before they can begin their appointment. Those who do not hold active security clearances must inform the regional bureau or post Human Resources Office promptly after their selection. The post or hiring bureau will initiate the clearance process with Diplomatic Security but will require prompt cooperation and input from the candidate. The candidate may not be

brought on board until s/he receives a minimum of an appropriate interim clearance for the position. If the candidate cannot obtain the required clearance in time to comply with the one-year requirement, the bureau will rescind the offer of employment.

Candidates may be able to serve up to the maximum of their sponsoring employee's tour of duty, provided sufficient funding is available, the bureau wishes to renew the position, and their supervisor documents their performance as satisfactory or better. As with any limited non-career appointment, there is an absolute maximum term of five years. EPAP Professional Associates will be evaluated annually using form JF-57, Performance Appraisal for AEFMs.

**9. EPAP POSITION TITLES:** Position titles for EPAP are as indicated on the advertised list, that is: Professional Associate – (Name of) EPAP Area, e.g. Professional Associate – Economics. Family members serving in EPAP positions should not use Officer, Assistant, Acting or any other title than stated above.

**10. EXPECTATIONS OF SELECTED APPLICANTS:** Positions offered within the EPAP Program are professional-level, full-time positions. Selected candidates may request accrued annual leave and LWOP may be granted at the discretion of the post. All extended leave requests that are 30 calendar days or longer must be approved in advance by the employee's supervisor at post and the regional bureau.

**11. TRAINING:** Candidates selected for EPAP Professional Associate positions are encouraged to take any related training courses while in Washington, DC on Home Leave, R&R or personal travel. No financial support for training is currently available for selected candidates prior to beginning a position, except for candidates selected for IM positions. IM training information is available in paragraph 12.

However, if a candidate is hired and working and post wishes to fund travel costs and per diem for an EPAP Professional Associate to take courses at FSI or a regional training center, salary will continue to be paid during the training period from central funds. Individuals selected for this program will generally have priority over other EFM's for language and functional training enrollment, but there is no guarantee that space will be available. Applicants should contact [FLOASKTraining@state.gov](mailto:FLOASKTraining@state.gov) for more information on training registration.

**12. TRAINING FOR IM POSITIONS:** Family members selected for EPAP

Professional Associate positions in IM are expected to successfully complete the following online training courses before they begin in IM EPAP positions: \*SMART messaging for System Administrators, A+, Network+, Security+, Windows 7, Server 2008, Active Directory, and Exchange 2010. IRM will fund the salary and training costs for family members selected for IM positions. Please contact [IRM-EPAP@state.gov](mailto:IRM-EPAP@state.gov) with any questions on training for IM positions.

Certain training requirements might be waived if a family member can demonstrate that they have passed the vendor-specified tests related to that requirement. Further details of this requirement, and precise course numbers, are available from [IRM-EPAP@state.gov](mailto:IRM-EPAP@state.gov).

**13. NEXT OPEN SEASON TO APPLY FOR QUALIFICATION:** Family members who have not received qualification to the program may not apply for any of the positions currently advertised. There will be a spring open season to apply for qualification, but the dates have not yet been determined. We will announce those via cable, which will be posted on our website:

<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c41174.htm>

U.S. citizen family members interested in the program can begin to prepare for the next open season by reviewing the documents posted on the website above, create (or update) a USAJOBS resume and request any required educational documents now.

Family members are encouraged to seek qualification during the next open season in order to be ready to apply for any future positions.

All current information on the program is available at:

<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c41174.htm> or contact the EPAP Coordinator at [FLOaskEPAP@state.gov](mailto:FLOaskEPAP@state.gov).